THE LOUNGER.

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To the AUTHOR of the LOUNGER.

Dis ille adverſis genitus, fatoque ſiniſtro.
JUVENAL.

SIR,

I AM one of that claſs of men called *Valetudinarians*, people whoſe ordinary ſtate of health is ſickneſs, and who are never well enough to live without the aid of a phyſician. My father, who was a cadet of a family of quality, died of old age at thirty-four. I was born in the ſeventh month, and paſſed the firſt three years of my life in a baſket lined with cotton, which was carefully placed by the fire-ſide of my mother's bed-chamber, and carried with great caution round the room once a-day for the ſake of exerciſe. In my fourth year, I was allowed to breathe the freſh air in the arms of my nurſe; and by the time I had reached my ſeventh, was able to walk round the parlour by the aid of a go-cart. But to record minutely the tranſactions of my infancy is not to my preſent purpoſe. Suffice it to ſay, that by the care of the excellent parent I have mentioned, and the power of medicine, I attained to the age of thirty-five; and bating my aſthma and a nervous atrophy, enjoyed, thank God, a very tolerable ſtate of health. At this unlucky period, death deprived me of the beſt of mothers, and left me a helpleſs orphan with a fortune of L. 20,000.

Among the gentlemen of the faculty, whom, from my unhappy conſtitution, it was neceſſary to keep in conſtant pay, there was one whoſe attentions ſeemed to partake ſo much of perſonal attachment, that I reſolved to retain him in my houſe by a fixed ſalary. Dr *Doddipoll* was a valetudinary like myſelf; and I had always experienced from him that tender condolence which the diſtreſſed feel for each other. His ſkill was very great; and he had at the ſame time ſo little of the quackery of his profeſſion, that he openly derided all pretenſions to myſtery, and plainly declared, that he regarded his brethren of the faculty as ſolemn impoſtors. The long ſtudies preparatory to this profeſſion, and the extenſive learning ſuppoſed to be neceſſary to attain a knowledge of its doctrines, he treated with the utmoſt ridicule. I have often heard him ſay, that he would engage to communicate the whole ſcience of medicine to any perſon of common intellects in a couple of hours. My friend Doddi-

poll held but one maxim in phyſic, which was, that all diſeaſes have their ſeat in the ſtomach, and proceed either from too great a richneſs and viſcidity, or an extreme thinneſs of the gaſtric juices. The former was to be corrected by the uſe of attenuating food, the latter by that which is more nutritive. To the former claſs he referred my caſe; as it was evident, he ſaid, from the thinneſs of my legs and the paleneſs of my complexion, that the juices were too thick to circulate freely through the minute lymphatics, and thus the parts were deprived of their due nouriſhment. His own caſe he decided to belong to the contrary claſs, as was apparent from the unwieldy ſize of his legs and belly, and the ſcurvy in his face. The thinneſs of the juices gave riſe to a ſuperabundant ſecretion, which diſtended all the veſſels, occaſioned too great a determination of blood to the head, and ſwelled the whole body. His regimen and mine were therefore totally oppoſite. To attenuate my juices, I was fed chiefly on ſkim-milk, panada, and vegetables; while Doddipoll, to correct the tenuity of his fluids, was reſtricted to beef and pudding, turkey and chine, &c. a tankard of mild ale, and a bottle of old claret. You will forgive my uſe of *medical* terms, Mr Lounger; they are, ſtrictly ſpeaking, my mother-tongue, and I cannot eaſily expreſs myſelf without them.

My family conſiſted at this time, beſides the Doctor and myſelf, of my man-ſervant Peter and my maid Betty, two honeſt and faithful domeſtics; and I may ſay with great truth, there never was a better regulated or more orderly houſehold. It was Peter's province to rub me down in the morning with the fleſh-bruſh, to make my water-dock tea, to attend me at noon with the dumb-bells, and meaſure out my hour of exerciſe, make up my electuaries, cook my ſago and panada, boil my water-gruel and white-wine whey, air my flannel-ſhirt, and put me to bed. Betty's ſervices were chiefly dedicated to my worthy friend the Doctor, who always gave her the commendation of an excellent and diſcreet young woman, and perfectly acquainted with all the duties of an handmaid.

Such, Sir, was the courſe of my life, during thoſe which may be termed my halcyon-days; when, ah, the inconſtancy of human affairs! my friend, my companion, my Eſculapius, was carried off by a fit of apoplexy. The poor Doctor—how ſhall I deſcribe the melancholy ſcene! A fillet of veal ſtood upon the table.—It was ſtuffed, which was his favourite way of dreſſing it.—He looked at it for ſome time, muttered ſomething about butter and oranges, fell back in his chair, and expired.

ALAS, POOR DODDIPOLL!

On this melancholy occaſion, I had many conſolatory viſits from my friends and relations. Among theſe laſt, I was much ſtruck with the tender ſympathy of one of my female couſins, the Honourable Miſs *Angelica Tempeſt*. This Lady, though paſt her bloom, had ſtill the appearance of a fine woman. Though ſhe had no fortune, having had an excellent education, ſhe wanted none of the accompliſhments of a Lady of faſhion. But what ſtruck me moſt in her character was the ſenſibility of her diſpoſition, and that affectionate concern ſhe ſhewed for all ſort of diſtreſſes. She would often ſit by

by me for hours, liſten to my complaints with the moſt ſympathiſing attention, and inquire into their particular ſymptoms with the tenderneſs of a ſiſter, and the ſolicitude of a ſick nurſe. To cut the matter ſhort, Sir, ſhe ſo far won upon me, that in an evil hour, and tempted I believe by the devil, I threw myſelf at her feet, and propoſed marriage. She did not diſdain my ſuit; and after a reaſonable time for the adjuſtment of all punctilios, we became man and wife.

For the firſt week all went ſmoothly enough; but at the end of that period, I began to perceive a riſing ſpirit of innovation, which gave me ſome diſquiet. I had made my account with ſome changes; as the family-eſtabliſhment which was ſuitable to my bachelor ſtate might be thought too contracted for that into which I had now entered. I therefore readily enough acquieſced in the propoſal of hiring a larger houſe, and adding two to the number of our domeſtics; but it was with much concern I learned that the reform was to be begun by the diſmiſſion of the truſty Peter and the diſcreet Mrs Betty. It was in vain I urged the merits of both, their long ſervices, and perfect acquaintance with the complicated ſyſtem of my poor conſtitution, its wants, and its regimen. My wife declared, that to attend to theſe was no leſs her duty than her pleaſure, and that while ſhe lived, no other hands than her own ſhould touch the body of her deareſt Lord. It was however very ſoon perceived, that in this ſhe had undertaken a taſk more laborious than ſhe was aware of. The exerciſe of the fleſh-bruſh was found ſo fatiguing, that on the third morning, in pure compaſſion to her, I propoſed to make trial of one of our new footmen. This raſcal, who ſeemed endowed with the ſtrength of Hercules, began as if he had been currying a centaur, and actually diſlocated my ſhoulder at the firſt experiment.

During a painful confinement to my chair, which was the conſequence of this unlucky accident, it was not unnatural to have expected that my wife, who was ſo remarkable for the tender feelings, would have exerciſed her utmoſt aſſiduity in adminiſtering conſolation under a diſaſter, of which it was plain ſhe had been the cauſe. But what, Sir, was the method ſhe took to comfort me? Why, by endeavouring to perſuade me that there was nothing the matter with me. She had the cruelty to tell me, that I had no other diſeaſe than vapours, and undertook, with equal folly and preſumption, that ſhe would completely cure me in the ſpace of a month. A pragmatical coxcomb of a phyſician, who now ſupplied the place of my late worthy friend, declared my wife's notion of my diſorder to be altogether juſt, and concurred with her in opinion as to the method of cure. Moderate exerciſe was ordered for bracing my nerves, and company and amuſements were preſcribed for keeping up my ſpirits.

For theſe purpoſes, the chariot was ordered to attend every morning immediately after breakfaſt; and, for the benefit of air and exerciſe, I was rattled for four hours upon the ſtones, through a tour of twenty viſits, and the complete circuit of all the mercers and milliners ſhops in town. My deareſt contrived to have a ſelect company of a few friends to dine with us every day, and a ſmall whiſt

party

party in the evening, except on Monday, which was our private concert, and every ſecond Thurſday, when ſhe had a route of ſix tables. Once a-week I was conveyed to the play, and had the pleaſure of ſeeing *the Siddons*, at the repeated hazard of ſuffocation; but here I own it alleviated my feelings to obſerve the greateſt part of the audience undergoing, without compulſion, apparently the ſame agonies with myſelf.

I always delighted, Sir, in tranquillity. Judge, therefore, of my mortification, in now finding that my life was deſtined to be one continued ſcene of tumult and turmoil. We are informed, that in the days of witchcraft, when it was the misfortune of any old woman to incur that imputation, it was cuſtomary with her accuſers to prevent her intercourſe with the devil, which was ſuppoſed to be chiefly during ſleep, by keeping her continually awake. My wife, Sir, ſeems to hold ſome opinions very analogous to that now mentioned. Apprehending a ſtate of quiet to be of the worſt conſequences to my diſorder, it is her conſtant ſtudy to guard againſt and prevent it by every poſſible means. As, with all her induſtry to find employment for the day, there muſt be ſome few moments unoccupied, ſhe has provided ſeveral domeſtic companions of ſuch of the animal tribe as are moſt averſe to reſt and ſilence. We have three dogs, who wage eternal warfare with as many cats. A parrot is ſuſpended in the ſtair-caſe, a magpie in the antichamber, and ſix Canary birds in the parlour. A monkey, I am informed, has been commiſſioned, and is actually upon the road: but this additional curſe I believe I ſhall effectually prevent, having taken meaſures to have him waylaid and aſſaſſinated.

But theſe are the leaſt of my grievances. I muſt now inform you of ſomewhat more ſerious. I have of late but too good reaſon to believe, that my loving ſpouſe has actually formed a plot againſt my life. Exerciſe, Sir, and change of air, have been the pretence for frequent expeditions to the country, with one or two friends, which ſhe calls parties of pleaſure, but which I have generally found to land in ſome curſed diſaſter, which has gone near to be my death. I have been twice caught in a thunder-ſtorm on horſeback, thrice in a hurricane upon the water, four times broke down in a carriage, and the laſt time compelled to ride ten miles in the night-air upon a hard-trotted coach-horſe. I underſtand it is now reſolved, by the advice of the family-phyſician above mentioned, to ſet out in a few days hence upon a tour through the north of England, and in our way to make trial of the mineral waters of Buxton, Matlock, or Harrowgate. What may be the iſſue of this expedition, is hid in the womb of fate. The deſign of it, however, is ſufficiently apparent; and I cannot help regarding it as intended for my *coup de grace*. If I ſurvive it, you may once again hear from me; if not, you may perhaps beſtow a tear on the memory of the ill-fated

JEREMIAH DY-SOON.

EDINBURGH:

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